

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 1. Claims 2-11 were canceled in an earlier Preliminary Amendment. Please enter new claims 12-23 as follows:

1-11. (Canceled)

12. (New) A drafting device for drafting fiber bundles, comprising:

a bottom roller, and at least one pair of top front rollers opposed to said bottom roller;

an apron surrounding each of said top front rollers, said aprons defining a clamping surface with said bottom roller for fiber bundles, said aprons having a circumferential cross-sectional shape;

a deflection member associated with each said top front roller around which said aprons run, and

wherein said deflection members are disposed away from said clamping surface and establish a running path for said aprons that results in a slight deformation of said circumferential cross-sectional shape of said aprons such that said aprons are subjected to substantially only tractive tension resulting from said aprons attempting to assume said circumferential cross-sectional shape.

13. (New) The drafting device as in claim 12, wherein said deflection members are provided on a rigid holder, said holder detachably fastened on a structural component that supports said top front rollers.

14. (New) The drafting device as in claim 12, wherein said deflection members define recessed deflection surfaces for said aprons.

15. (New) The drafting device as in claim 14, further comprising lateral guide members disposed at opposite sides of each of said deflection surfaces.

16. (New) The drafting device as in claim 13, wherein said structural component comprises a shaft between said top front rollers, said rigid holder comprising a holding member that detachably fastens to said shaft.

17. (New) The drafting device as in claim 16, wherein said rigid holder is disposed against a stationary structural component to prevent rotation of said rigid holder with rotation of said shaft.

18. (New) The drafting device as in claim 13, wherein said structural component comprises a guide rod for said top front rollers, said rigid holder fastened to said guide rod.

19. (New) The drafting device as in claim 13, wherein said aprons have a circumferential cross-sectional shape that is between about 1 and 1/2 to about 3 times a circumference of said top front rollers.

20. (New) The drafting device as in claim 19, wherein a spacing interval between a deflection surface of said deflection members and an axis of said front top rollers is between about 1 to about 2 times a diameter of said front top rollers.

21. (New) A method for guiding an apron in a drafting device for drafting fiber bundles, the drafting device having a bottom roller and at least one pair of top front rollers, said method comprising:

guiding an apron around each of the top front rollers such that the aprons define a clamping surface with the bottom roller for fiber bundles, said aprons having a circular cross-sectional shape;

defining a running path for the aprons that results in a slight deformation of the circular cross-sectional shape of the aprons such that the aprons are subjected to substantially only tractive tension resulting from the aprons attempting to assume their circular cross-sectional shape.

22. (New) The method as in claim 21, further comprising guiding the aprons around a deflection member associated with each of the top front rollers, and defining a spacing interval between a deflection surface of the deflection member and an axis of the top front rollers to achieve the tractive tension resulting substantially only from the aprons attempting to assume their circular cross-sectional shape.

23. (New) The method as in claim 22, comprising defining the spacing interval such that the aprons assume a slightly bowed shape between the bearing surface of the deflection member and their contact point with the top front rollers.